

Stages and Indiana Special Education

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal assessment software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances Indiana's special education assessment because:

- 1. Stages aligns with the Indiana's Academic Standards in Mathematics and Language Arts.**
- 2. Stages generates evidence of learner performance for IASEP through DIAS 2000.**
- 3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.**
- 4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

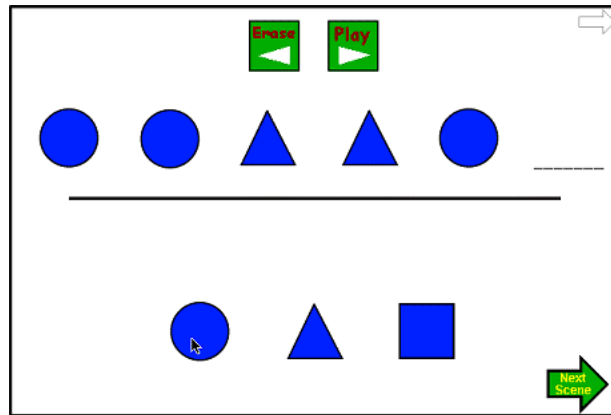
1. Stages aligns with the Indiana's Academic Standards in Mathematics and Language Arts.

Stages ensures meaningful and effective access to general curriculum areas for learners who require modifications in order to participate in statewide regular assessment. The learner's IEP team can also use Stages to help determine if alternate assessment is appropriate by providing informal benchmarks of learner progress in Math and Language Arts general curriculum areas. Please refer to the section of this document entitled "How Stages Correlates with Indiana's Academic Standards" for detailed matching.

2. Stages generates evidence of learner performance for IASEP through DIAS 2000.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product as a benchmark. At the end of each activity, a report with instructional data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructor may wish to then print that screen, save the screenshot, or save the information as a text-format electronic file as examples of student work for DIAS (Documentation of Indiana's Academic Standards) 2000 evidence collection and IASEP ratings.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.



Example screen shot from Stage Four: Create Patterns

3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills with minimal supervision. Many Stages activities include accessible choice-making opportunities. Functional skills activities include real-life community settings.

4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools..

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's instructor, parents, and others in the IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Indiana assessment cycle for special education. The Stages software is a comprehensive benchmark tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable information on learner skill achievement, determine assessment strategy, and discover the learner's abilities and thinking approach. The resulting electronic files are compatible with the DIAS information system.

How Stages Correlates with Indiana's Academic Standards¹

English/Language Arts 1st and 2nd Grades

Standard 1

READING: Word Recognition, Fluency, and Vocabulary Development

Concepts about Print

- 1.1.1 Match oral words to printed words.
- 1.1.2 Identify letters, words, [and sentences].

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Reading Readiness: Letter ID

- Stage Four *Letter ID* presents the learner with letters using simple animations. The learner identifies upper and lower case letters when presented with prompts.
- Stage Five *Meaning* presents the learner with Dolch words. The learner selects the picture in a scene that illustrates the meaning of the word.

Phonemic Awareness

- 1.1.7 Create and state a series of rhyming words.
- 2.1.1 Demonstrate an awareness of the sounds that are made by different letters by distinguishing beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words; rhyming words; and clearly pronouncing blends and vowel sounds.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Reading: Sounds, Meaning

- Stage Five *Sounds* highlights spelling patterns to emphasize the rhyming final sounds of words. The activity gives the learner short rhyming sentence pairs with simple animations. The screen displays text while audio plays. The learner then has a chance to identify the rhyming word pairs from a word wall.

Decoding and Word Recognition

- 1.1.11 Read common sight words (words that are often seen and heard).
- 2.1.4 Recognize common abbreviations (*Jan., Fri.*).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Words: High Frequency Words, Word Copy

- The *High Frequency Words* activity presents a short passage missing words from the following list: *the, of, and, a, to, in, is, you, that, and it*. Using *Word Copy*, the instructor can create custom lists that read words for the learner to enter, such as abbreviations.

¹ Information from Indiana's Academic Standards for 1st and 2nd Grades. Adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education for 2000-2001. Source: <http://www.indianastandardsresources.org> (Accessed June 28, 2002).

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.1.18 Classify categories of words.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Two: Nouns, Verbs, Attributes

Stage Three: All Activities

- Stage Two exposes the learner to language using short rhyming passages about familiar things such as animals and foods.
- Stage Three extends the same vocabulary from Stage Two and asks the learner to categorize and identify the functions of objects.

Standard 2

READING: Reading Comprehension

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

1.2.4 Follow one-step written instructions.

2.2.8 Follow two-step written instructions.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: All 'Explore' Activities

- The learner attends to verbal and written instructions in order to learn how to solve problems or explore new vocabulary.

2.2.7 Interpret information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Charts and Graphs

- This activity allows the learner to demonstrate understanding of graphical representation of information.

Standard 4

WRITING: Writing Process

Organization and Focus

- 1.4.1 Discuss ideas and select a focus for group stories or other writing.

Research and Technology

- 2.4.3 Find ideas for writing stories and descriptions in pictures or books.
2.4.5 Use a computer to draft, revise, and publish writing.

Standard 5

WRITING: Writing Applications

- 1.5.1 Write brief narratives (stories) describing an experience.
1.5.2 Write brief expository (informational) descriptions of a real object, person, place, or even, using sensory details.
1.5.3 Write simple rhymes.
1.5.4 Use descriptive words when writing (also 2.5.5).
1.5.5 Write for different purposes and to a specific audience or person (also 2.5.6).
2.5.4 Write rhymes and simple poems

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: All activities

- The learner independently selects a picture as a writing prompt in the *Making Stories* activity, or can import a custom photograph.
- All Stage Seven activities that ask the learner to produce written expression are accessible by many input devices, such as touchscreen, mouse dwell, alternative keyboard and switch. The text-to-speech capability gives the learner an opportunity to ‘play back’ written work.

Standard 6

WRITING: Written English Language Conventions

Handwriting

- 2.6.1 Form letters correctly and space words and sentences properly so that writing can be read easily by another person.

Sentence Structure

- 1.6.2 Write in complete sentences.
2.6.3 Use the correct word order in written sentences.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Sentences: Building Sentences, Writing Sentences

- *Building Sentences* gives the learner an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of sentence structure without requiring typing skills. The activity is a collection of three levels of word walls with text-to-speech capability. *Writing Sentences* is another unstructured activity. The instructor can provide instructions or prompts for each sentence.

Grammar

- 1.6.3 Identify and correctly use singular and plural nouns (*dog/dogs*).
- 1.6.4 Identify and correctly write contractions (*isn't, aren't, can't*).
- 1.6.5 Identify and correctly write possessive nouns (*cat's meow, girls' dresses*) and possessive pronouns (*my/mine, his/hers*).

Punctuation

- 1.6.6 Correctly use periods (*I am five.*), exclamation points (*Help!*), and question marks (*How old are you?*) at the end of sentences.

Capitalization

- 1.6.7 Capitalize the first word of a sentence, names of people, and the pronoun *I*.
- 2.6.7 Capitalize all proper nouns, words at the beginning of sentences and greetings, months and days of the week, and titles and initials of people.

Spelling

- 1.6.8 Spell correctly three- and four-letter words (*can, will*) and grade-level-appropriate sight words (*red, fish*).
- 2.6.8 Spell correctly words like *was, were, says, said, who, what, why*, which are used frequently but do not fit common spelling patterns.
- 2.6.9 Spell correctly words with short and long vowel sounds (*a, e, i, o, u*), r-controlled vowels (*ar, er, ir, or, ur*), and consonant-blend patterns (*bl, dr, st*).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: *Making Words*: Copy Words

Making Sentences: Writing Sentences, Spelling and Grammar

- *Copy Words* and *Writing Sentences* allow the instructor to design activities that read the learner a word, prompt or sentence without showing text on the screen. The learner can then enter a response. *Spelling and Grammar* is a collection of different activities including: Spelling, Homonyms, Capitalization, Noun-Verb Agreement, Pronoun Use, Word Order, and a Custom option. Lists of words/sentences may be saved for future sessions.

Mathematics

1st and 2nd Grades

Standard 1: Number Sense

1.1.1 Count, read, and write whole numbers up to 100.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Number ID, Counting

- Stage Four *Number ID* gives the learner an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of number words in the context of a telephone key pad or an elevator scene. Numbers from 0 to 10 are included. *Counting* includes an accessible number line and pictures as virtual manipulatives.

1.1.8 For a shape divided into 8 or fewer congruent (matching) parts, describe a shaded portion as “_ out of _ parts” and write the fraction.

2.1.8 Recognize fractions as parts of a whole or parts of a group (up to 12 parts).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Fractions

- Stage Five *Fractions* includes parts of whole objects (regions) and parts of groups (sets) of objects. The multiple choice questions ask the learner to distinguish fractions with like and unlike denominators.

1.1.10 Represent, compare, and interpret data using pictures and picture graphs.

2.1.12 Represent, compare, and interpret data using tables, tally charts, and bar graphs.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Charts and Graphs

- The Stage Five *Charts and Graphs* activity includes bar graphs, line graphs, and pie charts. Familiar topics such as favorite snacks and animals help make the activities engaging for the learner.

2.1.5 Compare whole numbers up to 100 and arrange them in numerical order.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Problem Solving: Number Guess

- Stage Five *Number Guess* applies the learner’s knowledge of relative number values to a deductive reasoning game. The range of numbers may be set for varying levels of difficulty by the instructor.

Standard 2: Computation

1.2.1 Show the meaning of addition (putting together, increasing) using objects.

1.2.2 Show the meaning of subtraction (taking away, comparing, finding the difference) using objects.

2.2.1 Model addition of numbers less than 100 with objects and pictures.

2.2.2 Add two whole numbers less than 100 with and without regrouping.

2.2.3 Subtract two whole numbers less than 100 without regrouping.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Math Facts (+, -), Word Problems (+, -)

- These activities give the learner an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of addition and subtraction with and without the aid of diagrams on the screen, with and without regrouping.

Standard 4: Geometry

- 1.4.1 Identify, describe, compare, sort, and draw triangles, rectangles, squares, and circles.
- 1.4.3 Classify and sort familiar plane and solid objects by position, shape, size, roundness, and other attributes. Explain the rule you used.
- 1.4.7 Identify geometric shapes and structures in the environment and specify their location (also 2.4.5).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Assess: Shape ID

Stage Five: Problem Solving: Mystery Shape

- The learner demonstrates recognition of triangles, rectangles, circles, squares, and ovals in photographs and drawings in scenes and in isolation (blank background).
- Stage Five *Mystery Shape* applies the learner's knowledge of shape attributes to a deductive reasoning game.

- 1.4.6 Arrange and describe objects in space by position and direction: near, far, under, over, up, down, behind, in front of, next to, to the left or right of.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Spatial Relationships

- Stage Four *Spatial Relationships* gives the learner an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of relative position vocabulary such as 'above/below' or 'left/right.'

Standard 5: Measurement

- 1.5.1 Measure the length of objects by repeating a non-standard unit or a standard unit.
- 2.5.4 Estimate area and use a given object to measure the area of other objects.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Estimating

Stage Five: Math: Geometry

- Stage Four *Estimating* gives the learner an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of relative size vocabulary such as 'shorter', 'longer', 'small', and 'large'.
- Stage Five *Geometry* asks the learner questions about perimeter, area, and volume with the help of on-screen diagrams showing non-conventional units such as footsteps, tiles, and cubes.

- 1.5.6 Tell time to the nearest half-hour and relate time to events (before/after, shorter/longer).
- 2.5.9 Tell time to the nearest quarter hour, be able to tell five-minute intervals, [and know the difference between a.m. and p.m.].

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Assess: Telling Time

- Both analog and digital clocks are included in this activity.

- 1.5.7 Identify and give the values of pennies, nickels, and dimes.
- 2.5.12 Find the value of a collection of pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half-dollars, and dollars.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Assess: Counting Money, Money Equivalents

- Stage Six *Money* activities relate money amounts to situations of daily living.